

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended): ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus for the storage of wine, comprising:

a vessel provided with recycling means operable to withdraw the wine from a bottom region of the storage vessel and to reintroduce ~~it~~ the wine internally to the mass of wine in storage, and

conditioning means arranged to maintain in suspension the lees contained in the wine and/or to prevent sedimentation at the bottom of the vessel,

wherein the said conditioning means comprise a doctor blade device operable to scrape the inner surface of the bottom wall of the vessel;

wherein said doctor blade device comprises at least one rotating arm provided with a lip or brush slidable in contact with or close to the bottom of the vessel; and

wherein the apparatus further comprises a static scraper member mounted above the at least one arm of the rotary doctor blade device and operable to clean the arm.

Claims 2-4: (canceled).

Claim 5 (currently amended): ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein ~~the said conditioning means comprise tubular distribution means mounted adjacent to~~

the bottom of the vessel and communicating with the said recirculation means and provided with at least one of (1) a plurality of nozzles and/or (2) other efflux means arranged to deliver the wine supplied to ~~the~~ said tubular distribution means from ~~the~~ said recirculation means towards the bottom wall of the vessel.

Claim 6 (currently amended): ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to Claims 1 or 5, wherein the said conditioning means comprise one of a static or and rotary distribution device comprising one or more tubular arms extending radially from the central zone of the bottom of the vessel towards the side wall and having at least one of (1) a plurality of nozzles and/or (2) other efflux means for delivery of the wine supplied to ~~the~~ said distribution device by the recirculation means.

Claim 7 (currently amended): Apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein the said tubular distribution means are associated with one or more rotating blades adjacent to the bottom of the vessel.

Claim 8 (currently amended): ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ said conditioning means comprise a doctor blade device in association with tubular distribution means provided with at least one of (1) nozzles and/or (2) other efflux means operable to deliver the wine supplied to ~~the~~ said tubular distribution means from ~~the~~ said recirculation means.

Claim 9 (currently amended): ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to Claim 1, which is constituted by fermentation apparatus provided with a main vessel intended to constitute the said storage vessel and by an upper vessel, overlying the said main vessel, having a bottom with a central aperture with which is associated a shutter movable between an open position and a closure position closing the bottom aperture and actuated by an actuator.

Claim 10 (currently amended): ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ said recycling means comprise a wine supply duct adjacent the bottom wall of the said vessel.

Claim 11 (currently amended): ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein ~~the~~ said recycling means further include a duct for reintroducing the wine into the heart of the mass of wine in storage/refinement on the lees.

Claim 12 (currently amended): ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the bottom of the upper vessel has an associated hatch or door communicating with the main vessel for allowing complete filling of ~~the~~ said main vessel.

Claim 13 (currently amended): ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein at the upper end of the main vessel has an associated hatch or door to allow the complete filling of ~~the~~ said main vessel.

Claim 14 (currently amended): ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus according to Claim 9,
wherein the said recycling means have associated oxygen blowing means for oxygenation of the
wine subject to recycling.

Claim 15 (canceled).

16. (new): Apparatus for the storage of wine, comprising:
a vessel provided with recycling means operable to withdraw the wine from a bottom
region of the storage vessel and to reintroduce the wine internally to the mass of wine in storage;
and

conditioning means arranged to maintain in suspension the lees contained in the wine
and/or to prevent sedimentation at the bottom of the vessel,

wherein the said conditioning means comprise tubular distribution means mounted
adjacent to the bottom of the vessel and communicating with the said recirculation means and
provided with at least one of (1) a plurality of nozzles and (2) other efflux means arranged to
deliver the wine supplied to the said tubular distribution means from the said recirculation means
towards the bottom wall of the vessel.

17. (new): Apparatus for the storage of wine, comprising:
a vessel provided with recycling means operable to withdraw the wine from a bottom
region of the storage vessel and to reintroduce the wine internally to the mass of wine in storage;
and

conditioning means arranged to maintain in suspension the lees contained in the wine and/or to prevent sedimentation at the bottom of the vessel,

wherein the said conditioning means comprise at least one of a static and rotary distribution device comprising one or more tubular arms extending radially from the central zone of the bottom of the vessel towards the side wall and having at least one of (1) a plurality of nozzles and (2) other efflux means for delivery of the wine supplied to the said distribution device by the recirculation means.

18. (new): An apparatus for the storage of wine, comprising:

a vessel provided with recycling means operable to withdraw the wine from a bottom region of the storage vessel and to reintroduce the wine internally to the mass of wine in storage; and

conditioning means arranged to maintain in suspension the lees contained in the wine and/or to prevent sedimentation at the bottom of the vessel,

wherein said conditioning means comprise a doctor blade device in association with tubular distribution means provided with at least one of (1) nozzles and (2) other efflux means operable to deliver the wine supplied to the said tubular distribution means from the said recirculation means.